

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

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FM AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

TO AMEMBASSY COLOMBO

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AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD

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EO 11652: NA

TAGS: PFOR, PLOS, IN, CE

SUBJ: SRI LANKA-INDIAN MARITIME BOUNDARIES DISCUSSION

REF: COLOMBO 3508

1. GOI-GSL MARITIME BOUNDARIES DISCUSSIONS TOOK PLACE IN DELHI NOVEMBER 12 AND 13. THE DELEGATIONS WERE HEADED BY THE FOREIGN AFFAIRS SECRETARIES OF EACH GOVERNMENT. IN ADDITION TO MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS REPRESENTATIVES, THE GSL DELEGATION ALSO INCLUDED REPRESENTATIVES FROM THEIR FISHERIES MINISTRY.

2. ACCORDING TO THE DEPUTY HIGH COMMISSIONER OF SRI LANKA IN NEW DELHI, TISSA JAYAKODDY, THE DISCUSSIONS ARE A SEQUEL TO THE AGREEMENT CONCLUDED LAST JUNE ON THE BOUNDARY IN THE PALK BAY UNDER WHICH THE ISLAND OF KACHCHATIVU WENT TO SRI LANKA. THE CURRENT DISCUSSIONS ARE TO DELINEATE THE BOUNDARY IN THE GULF OF MANAAR AND THE BAY OF BENGAL. JAYAKODDY SAID THE MEDIAN LINE PRINCIPLE EMPLOYED IN THE PALK BAY SETTLEMENT WILL BE USED IN THE OTHER TWO AREAS. HE SAID THAT

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THE ONLY REAL ISSUE IN THE CURRENT DISCUSSIONS WAS

THAT OF FISHING RIGHTS, AS UNDER THE MEDIAN LINE PRINCIPLE THE WADGE BANK, TRADITIONALLY FISHED BY THE CEYLONESE, WOULD GO TO INDIA. JAYAKODDY WAS CONFIDENT THAT SOME ARRANGEMENT COULD BE MADE TO PERMIT THE CEYLONESE TO CONTINUE TO FISH IN THESE WATERS.

3. JAYAKODDY CHARACTERIZED THE NOVEMBER 12-13 DISCUSSIONS AS "PRELIMINARY" AND SAID THAT NO TIME HAD BEEN FIXED FOR THE NEXT ROUND. HE EMPHASIZED, HOWEVER, THAT WITH THE CONCLUSION OF THE PALK BAY SETTLEMENT THERE WOULD BE NO REAL PROBLEM IN REACHING AGREEMENT ON THE GULF OF MANAAR AND THE BAY OF BENGAL.
SAXBE

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